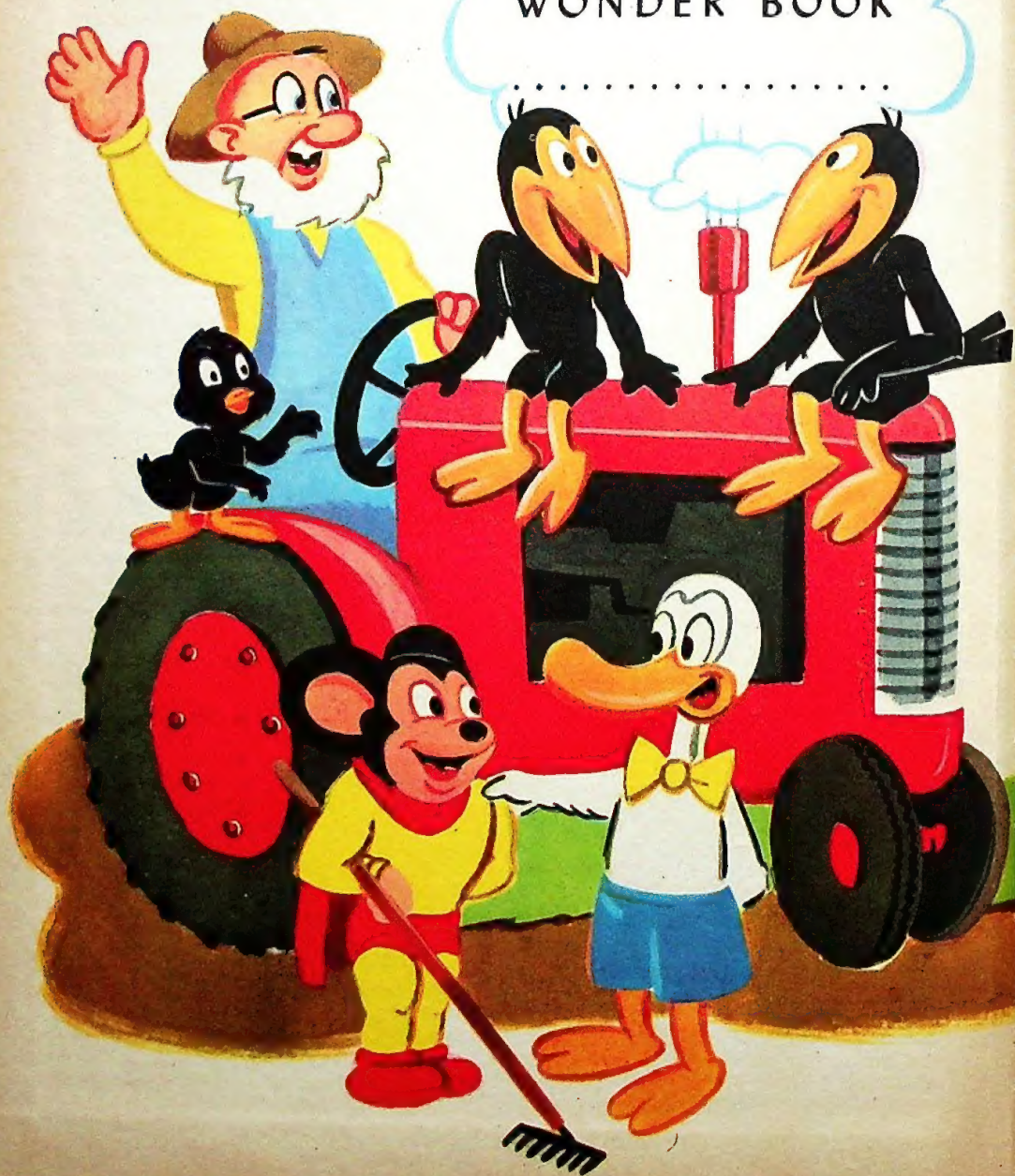


A JOKE ON FARMER AL FALFA



This is my
WONDER BOOK

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A JOKE ON FARMER AL FALFA

Story by CROSBY NEWELL

Pictures by IRV GERSHEN



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A stylized illustration of a room. The wall is red. On the left, a window is covered by green curtains. In the foreground, a white table holds two green cups; one is empty with a spoon, the other contains a dark liquid. A red chair is partially visible. On the wall, a calendar for June is pinned, and a portion of a March calendar is visible on the right.

JUNE

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

MAR

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FARMER AL FALFA came downstairs one morning on the first day of the month and pulled three sheets from the calendar by mistake. The sheets for April and May stuck to March and suddenly it was June. Of course it was really the first of April — and you know what day that is—but Farmer Al Falfa didn't.



"By cracky, it's June already and I haven't done a single spring chore," muttered Farmer Al Falfa to himself. "I'll really have to step some to get caught up."

He hurried outside and fell down the three front steps, but that didn't stop him. "I just can't lose a minute," he gasped, rubbing his sore knee.

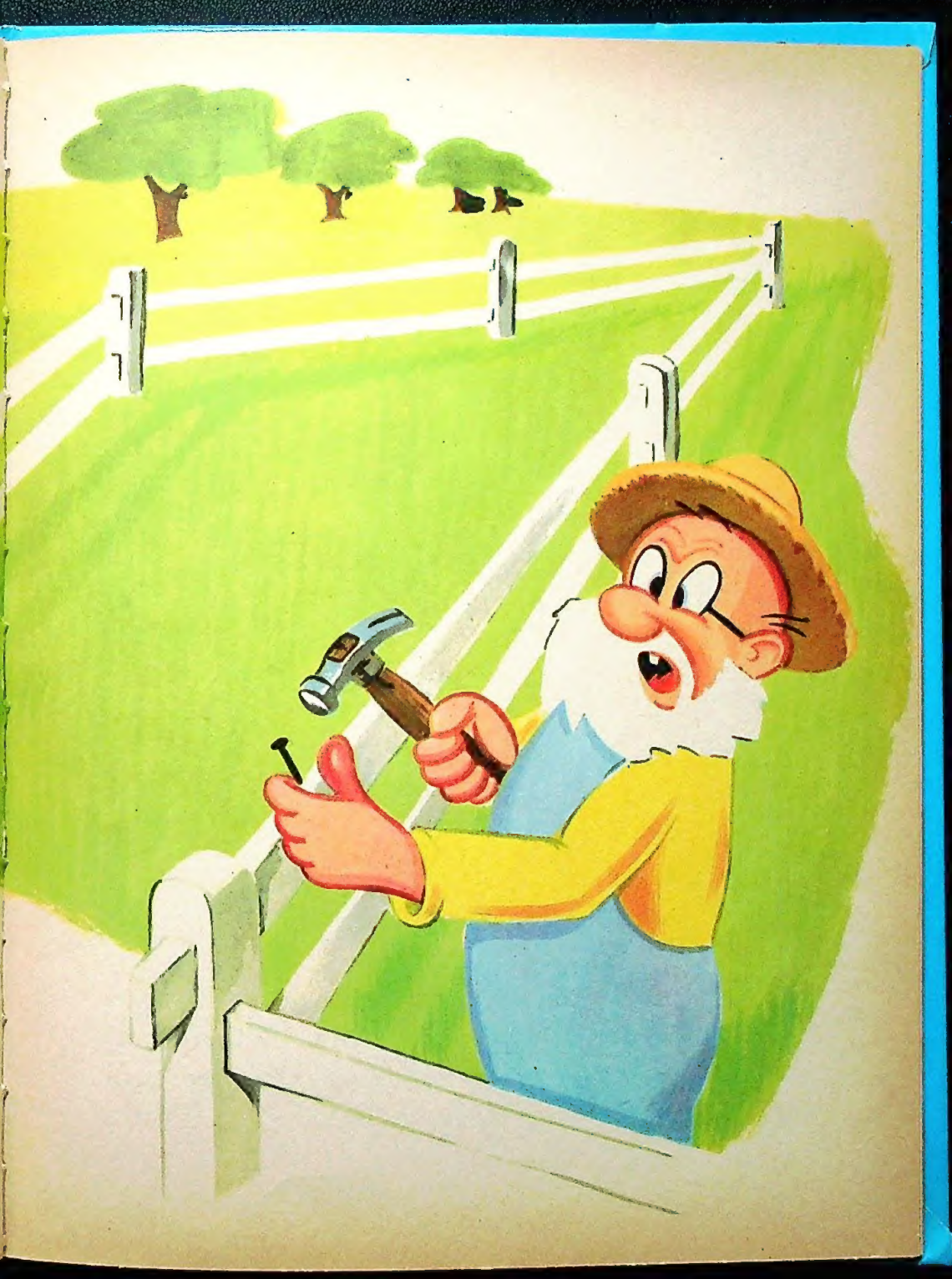


He plowed a field — up one furrow and down another — so fast that Heckle and Jeckle, those two magpies, thought they were caught in a windstorm. “The first of June,” Farmer Al Falfa kept sighing, “and not a spring chore done!”



Heckle looked at Jeckle and grinned. "He thinks it's June," he cackled. "Someone's playing an April Fool joke!" They sat back to watch the fun.

Farmer Al Falfa rushed around and mended every broken fence on the farm. The air was filled with the tap-tap of his hammer, and he only hit his thumb once. "Drat!" he cried. "I can't stop now. It's the first of June and not a spring chore done!"





Then he planted the beans, tied up the tomato vines, and chopped down four trees. "The first of June!" he said. "By ginger, spring's come and gone and I haven't seen one robin."



Dinky Duck waddled past just in time to hear him. He started to quack, but then closed his bill. Someone was playing an April Fool joke on Farmer Al Falfa and Dinky stood aside to watch the fun.



Farmer Al Falfa painted the barn a nice bright red — up one side and down the other. He painted the weather vane a shiny black, and stepped into the paint bucket twice in his hurry.

He fixed the front gate, washed all the windows and put up the screens. "Where did the time go?" he asked himself. "It's the first of June and not a spring chore done! Hurry, hurry, hurry, summer is almost here."

Mighty Mouse, circling above, heard the words and smiled. Someone was playing an April Fool joke.





Farmer Al Falfa went without lunch and supper, working late into the night. Digging, plowing, planting, seeding, chopping, mending, painting and washing — so much to be done! So much to be done! “The first of June!” he gasped. “Got to get the spring chores done in a hurry!”



Gandy Goose heard him and hid a smile. Someone was playing an April Fool joke.

Just as Farmer Al Falfa was putting the last seed in the ground, he felt something cold drop on the end of his nose—then on his ear—then on his head. Snow? Oh, no! Not on the first of June!





Dinky Duck, Heckle and Jeckle, Mighty Mouse and Gandy Goose all watched from behind the woodpile as Farmer Al Falfa walked back to the house very slowly. He was very tired. But he still chuckled.



"Snow in June—worked so hard today I'm getting silly in the head," he said. Then he sank into a chair and turned on the radio.

"Everyone in this locality," the announcer was saying, "is surprised at the freak snowstorm falling over this area. April first *is* late for snow, but perhaps the weather is playing its own April Fool joke on us."



Farmer Al Falfa sat up. April first? He rushed over to the calendar. There it was — big and black and plain to see. June! Then he looked down at the waste basket. Lying where they had fallen that morning were the three calendar sheets — March, April and May. Without knowing it, Farmer Al Falfa had played an April Fool joke on himself!



His five friends, peeking in through the window, thought it was a much better joke than they could have played on him, and Gandy Goose laughed so hard that he lost two tail feathers. But how did Farmer Al Falfa feel about what had happened?

Why, he crept quietly upstairs to bed and slept all night under his patchwork quilt dreaming of the two months' vacation he was going to have. For there was not a single spring chore to be done on the whole farm — and who was the April Fool now?





Not Farmer Al Falfa, not Dinky Duck, or Mighty Mouse. Not Heckle and Jeckle or Gandy Goose. No, everyone was happy, which is really the nicest sort of April Fool joke.



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